



## **INFORMATION ON LONG-TERM EXCHANGES TO GERMANY**

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## WELCOME...

### ...AND CONGRATULATIONS!

You have chosen your school's GAPP Partner School for your long term stay in Germany – a country in the heart of Europe!

The GAP-Program is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to experience the German culture and the German way of life. You will live with a German family, attend a local school and thus get an inside view into the everyday life of a German student. Your host family will make you feel welcome and help you to fully experience a journey in life that you will never forget.

The long term exchange might be one of the biggest challenges you will take upon yourself, but it is a life-enriching and meaningful chance to create long lasting friendships between two different cultures and to leave prejudices and judgments behind. Open-minded, tolerant students will adjust easily and will thus get the most out of their stay in Germany.

This guidebook provides you with important information regarding the long term stay in Germany, especially on obtaining the necessary *Aufenthaltserlaubnis* (residence permit). It is also a short preparation for the life in a German host family and your time at a German secondary school.

Please be aware that GAPP is not acting as your exchange organization. It ensures that your stay abroad is based on a mutual agreement between partner schools.

We wish all participants an exciting and successful year!

Your **GAPP**-Team

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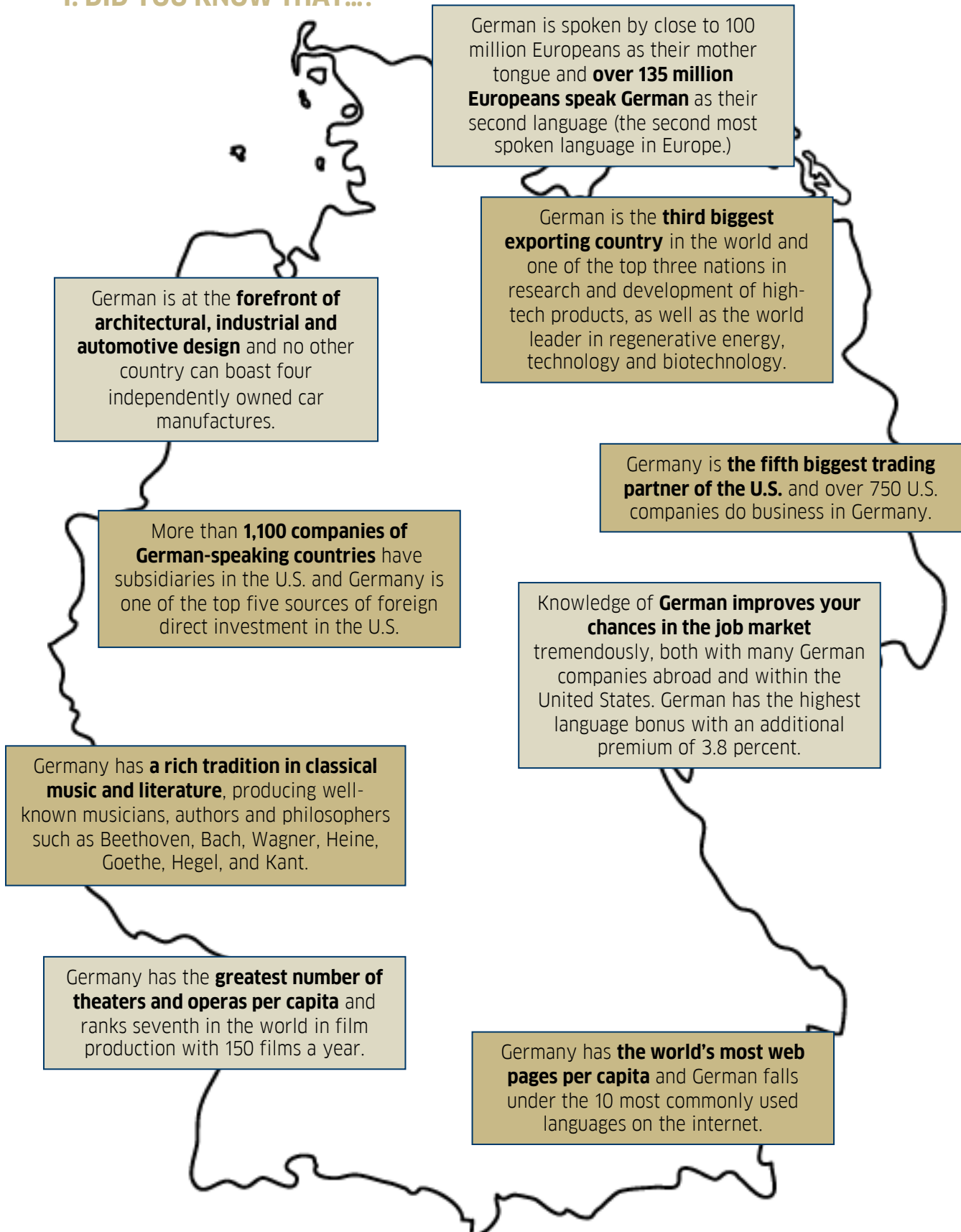
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## 1. DID YOU KNOW THAT...?



## 2. How to Apply for the *Aufenthaltserlaubnis* (residents permit)

All U.S.-students who wish to study at a secondary school in Germany are required to obtain an *Aufenthaltserlaubnis* (residence permit) at their local *Ausländerbehörde* (aliens department) in Germany. The aliens department is a public authority responsible for alien affairs. It is normally located at the local city hall or at another town nearby. The German host family should be able to assist you in finding the responsible office.

### RESIDENTS PERMIT

As a citizen of the United States of America, you may apply for your *Aufenthaltserlaubnis* (residence permit) after entering Germany. Therefore, U.S. citizens are eligible to travel to Germany without a visa and lodging their application directly at the local *Ausländerbehörde* (aliens' department), where the application will be finally decided. However, please call your airline in advance to make sure they don't have separate policies for US citizens visiting Germany. For more information also see the information of the German embassy in Washington at [www.germany.info](http://www.germany.info). **The consulate also advises to make an appointment at the local *Ausländerbehörde* in advance to avoid long wait times and to clarify whether you will need other documentation than what is mentioned in this booklet.**

### VISA

If you wish to initiate this lengthy process while you are still in the U.S., you can submit your application at the nearest German Consulate as soon as you have made the decision to go abroad. The German Consulate will forward your application for a residence permit to the aliens department that is competent for your intended place of residence in Germany. Once the application has been approved by the aliens department, the Consulate will issue a residence permit in form of a 'visa'. Nevertheless, the aliens department requires all residence permit holder's to register upon their first arrival to Germany. Thus, you **must contact your local aliens department within the first three months** of your stay in Germany. It is advised that you don't wait with contacting the aliens department until your three months are almost up. The granted 'visa' will be converted at the aliens office into a residence permit, covering the entire duration of your stay in Germany

### APPLYING FROM THE U.S.

In both cases, it is very important that you are in possession of a valid passport. Please note that the passport has to be **valid at least six months longer than the intended stay** in Germany. If you do not have a passport yet, or if the passport will expire within the timeframe, you should apply for a new passport as soon as possible.

### VALID PASSPORT

Generally, you need to state your reasons why you want to apply for a residence permit in Germany. An official "Letter of Acceptance" from the principal of the German school, stating that you are eligible to study at this particular school, is sufficient for the aliens department. This letter should be

### LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE

written in German and include your name and details, the prospective German address, and a brief confirmation about the intended stay at the German secondary school. Please ask your GAPP coordinator to assist you in requesting this document from the principal of your prospective German school. Please note that GAPP is not acting as an exchange organization. The exchange is based on a mutual agreement of the partner schools.

In addition to this, you must have proof of sufficient funds to financially secure your stay in Germany. Please ask your parents or legal guardian for a "Letter of Support", indicating that you will be financially supported during your studies in Germany. The monthly amount, confirmed in this letter, should not be less than Euro 720 (approx. \$ 800). To avoid complications during the application process, please write this short letter in German and English and make sure it states your relationship towards the author (e.g. "My son", "Our child"). You will also find a sample at the end of this booklet.

## LETTER OF SUPPORT

If you are not a U.S. citizen, but you have a valid passport from Australia, Canada, Israel, Japan, New Zealand or Switzerland, you may apply for the resident permit after entering Germany. However, you can also choose to apply already at your nearest German Consulate in the U.S.

## NON-U.S. CITIZENS

If you are a citizen of any other country, you must apply for a visa at the German Consulate prior to your departure to Germany.

Please bring your valid U.S. alien registration card or valid U.S. resident visa. The German Consulate only accepts Non-U.S. citizens holding a valid U.S. Resident Alien Card/U.S. Visa. If yours has expired, please **contact the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service** for renewal/extension first.

## RESIDENT ALIENS CARD/ U.S. VISA

In case you are not a U.S. citizen and you do not have a valid passport from your country of origin, the German Consulate accepts in rare instances a "U.S. Permit to Reenter". But only, if it is evident that you cannot get a national passport from your country of origin. Please be informed that visa applications of "Permit to Reenter"- holders may take up to two weeks longer.

## PERMIT TO REENTER

To avoid confusion about the two different options how to obtain an *Aufenthaltserlaubnis* (residence permit), the following pages describe in detail how to proceed with the application for the resident permit. Please **ALWAYS** check recent changes and procedures on the web page of the German Consulate:

[http://www.germany.info/Vertretung/usa/en/05\\_Legal/02\\_Directory\\_Services/01\\_Visa/\\_Study\\_Visa.html](http://www.germany.info/Vertretung/usa/en/05_Legal/02_Directory_Services/01_Visa/_Study_Visa.html)

**Please note: Occasionally, students have had problems at the aliens departments due to missing documents etc. Please ask your German GAPP coordinator before you leave for Germany to contact the local Ausländerbehörde to make sure that requirements haven't changed and to assist you with any problems that might occur.**

### 3. APPLICATION FOR THE RESIDENCE PERMIT

#### OPTION A

U.S.-citizens are eligible to travel to Germany without a visa. They can submit the application for the *Aufenthaltserlaubnis* (residence permit) at the local *Auslaenderbehoerde* within three months of their arrival in Germany.

Also entitled are: Citizens from Australia, Canada, Israel, Japan, New Zealand, Switzerland.

**Please note:** Within the first three months, you must submit your application for the *Aufenthaltserlaubnis* (residence permit) at your local *Auslaenderbehoerde* - ask local staff for the appropriate application form.

**Please bring the following:**

- Valid U.S. passport (valid at least three months longer than your intended stay in Germany).
- 2 recent passport photographs - (note that there are strict requirements)
- Letter of Acceptance from German school confirming participation in the exchange program.
- Letter of Support from parents or legal guardian confirming sufficient funds while studying in Germany - based on a monthly amount of € 585.

**Please note:**

- Fees will differ at every *Auslaenderbehoerde*.
- Normally, you have to pick up your passport, containing your residence permit, from your local *Auslaenderbehoerde* after 4-6 weeks.



This is a sample of a residence permit.

- **Option A** allows U.S.-Citizen to travel to Germany without applying for a visa first.
- If your application and all necessary forms and documents are in order according to the requirements, applying for a residence permit within three months of arrival should not be a problem.

## OPTION B

U.S. citizens who want to apply for the *Aufenthaltserlaubnis* (residence permit) while in the U.S. can submit their application to their nearest German Consulate. They must collect the residence permit at their local *Auslaenderbehoerde* within three months of their arrival in Germany.

**Please note:** All Non-U.S. Citizens must submit the application in person at the German Consulate unless otherwise stated (see Option A). Check here for the nearest **German Consulate** responsible for your state.

### **Please bring the following:**

- Two fully completed **“Application for Residence Permit” forms**
- Two signed **“declaration” forms**
- Valid U.S. passport (valid at least three months longer than your intended stay in Germany).
- 2 recent passport photographs – (note that there are strict requirements)
- Letter of Acceptance from German school confirming participation in the exchange program.
- Letter of Support from parents or legal guardian confirming sufficient funds while studying in Germany – based on a monthly amount of € 585.
- \$40 fee, and if you want the Consulate to mail your passport once your application has been approved, please add an additional fee of \$15 and bring a DHL self-addressed envelope.



This is a sample of a student visa.

### **Please note:**

- Once approved, your student visa will be issued for an initial period of up to three months.
- The application process will take up to 6-8 weeks because the *Auslaenderbehoerde* in the area of your intended stay has to approve the application first.
- **Option B** guarantees you a residence permit. However, you must register at your *Auslaenderbehoerde* within three months of your arrival in Germany and collect your residence permit

## 4. YOUR HEALTH INSURANCE FOR YOUR STAY IN GERMANY

The German American Partnership Program has a long-standing cooperation with the *Klemmer Unternehmensgruppe and Bernhard Reiseversicherungsmakler* (both insurance broker). They both offer health, accident and liability insurances for students.

### INSURANCE FOR GERMANY

GAPP, Inc. assumes no responsibility for any errors in the information provided, nor assumes any liability for any damages incurred as a consequence, directly or indirectly, of the use and application of any of the contents of the following information.

### DISCLAIMER

This independent insurance broker constantly scrutinizes all insurers and their products and offers a combined insurance package for U.S. students studying at German secondary schools. This insurance package includes health insurance, accident insurance, and personal liability insurance, and is available in a 'Basic' or 'Premium' version. As long as there are no deviations stipulated in the policy, either the student's parents or the host family can act as policy holders. If the student is already 18 years old, they can be the policy holder themselves. Enter the host family's address in Germany into the form if it is known already. The insured person is always the U.S. student.

### KLEMMER UNTER- NEHMENS- GRUPPE

All information is available in English on their web page; you can easily apply and arrange monthly payments online. Please visit the web page and check for updates for "Students Travel Insurance":

<http://www.klemmer-international.com/en/travelinsurance-for-students/incoming-germany-or-austria/students-insurance.html>

Generally, the health insurance covers medically required curative treatments for acute illnesses and accidents. This includes emergencies, in-patient treatments and operations in standard care. There is a deductible of € 35 when being insured in the 'Basic' version.

### COVERAGE

The 'Premium' package also includes dental and oral surgeon services and repairs of already existing dental prosthesis after accidents, as well as extensive coverage for the accident insurance and the personal liability insurance.

'Basic'	€ 0,99 per day
'Premium'	€ 1,36 per day

### PRICES

If you wish to contact the *Klemmer Unternehmensgruppe* send an email to [travel@klemmer-gruppe.com](mailto:travel@klemmer-gruppe.com).

### CONTACT

BERNHARD Reiseversicherungsmakler GmbH offers travel insurance for students under the age of 35. The insurance fulfills the official requirements according to the decision of the Council of the European Union from December 22nd, 2003 (including the Schengen Agreement).

**BERNHARD  
REISEVER-  
SICHERUNG**

'Premium until the 12th month' € 0,26 per day

**PRICES**

It is highly recommend to also buy a package of liability insurance, accident and legal insurance. This can be booked as an additional package online.

'Smart' € 0,26 per day

'Pro' € 0,29 per day

For more information on BERNHARD Reiseversicherungsmakler GmbH go visit:

<https://www.bernhard-reise.com/reiseversicherungen-sprachschueler-studenten/>

## 5. GETTING CREDITS FOR YOUR STUDIES

In order to comply with the credit and graduation requirements at your U.S. high school, please clarify well in advance for which courses in Germany you will be awarded with credits from your U.S. high school. The GAPP coordinator or guidance counselor can help you to identify which classes in Germany you should take. Since your school is already a GAPP school and maintains a long lasting partnership with its German counterpart, getting credit should not be a problem. However, your high school may – or may not – recognize academic credit awarded by another institution. Students who simply ‘assume’ they will earn U.S. credit for studies abroad are often disappointed upon their return. Do not take it for granted; you must arrange it in advance in cooperation with your American and German GAPP coordinators. Once your selected subjects are approved by your academic advisor, ask for a written document confirming that credits will be awarded for your choice of subjects.

### CREDITS

If you go to Germany during the second semester of junior year, you may wish to take the SATs in December before departure. Otherwise, you might miss testing opportunities and have to wait until October the following year. This is important if you are considering an early admission and/or would like to take the SATs at least twice before applying to college.

### SATS

Before you leave for Germany it is highly advisable that you have all of your U.S. high school classes, unfinished papers or online tests completed. This is the easiest way to adjust to your new environment, host family and school life. It enables you to learn German with your full concentration.

### UNFINISHED BUSINESSES

In case of financial hardship, GAPP, Inc. is committed to provide financial assistance to all students who are fully motivated to participate, but cannot afford a long term exchange to Germany. This program is based on the availability of funds.

### FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

If you are eligible to apply for our ‘Individual Financial Aid Grant’ please request the most current application form from our office. You need to attach a short essay in English (500 words min.), indicating why you want to participate in the exchange program and what you are expecting from your stay at a German secondary school. In addition to this, your GAPP coordinator or any other school administrator needs to write a letter of recommendation for you. Please submit the completed application to:

### REQUIRE- MENTS

German American Partnership Program, Inc.  
30 Irving Place, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor New York, NY 10003  
[gapp@newyork.goethe.org](mailto:gapp@newyork.goethe.org)

## 6. HELPFUL TIPS FOR YOUR STAY IN GERMANY

The question of debit cards and credit cards is always an important issue. Most of the debit cards are only accepted in a particular country or region, even though they are issued by VISA or MasterCard. The most commonly used debit card in Germany is called *EC-Karte* (formerly known as Eurocheque Card) and is accepted throughout Europe and beyond. To apply for a German debit card you need to open a German bank account at one of the numerous local or nationwide banks. As a student, you might get a free-of-charge bank account. Your host family can certainly recommend a bank and help you to open an account.

### DEBIT CARDS

Some American debit cards might be accepted in Europe, but make sure you confirm with your local bank that your card will definitely work at German ATMs. Please note: ATMs in Germany do not have the option to choose between savings and checking account and you will not get a receipt after your transaction. Clarify before your departure which of your accounts will be charged and inform your bank that you will be abroad for a certain period of time and that withdrawals from overseas are to be expected.

### PREPARA- TION

Probably the most convenient and least expensive way to withdraw money from your American account in Germany is to have a Bank of America account. Bank of America is an integral part of a worldwide group of leading banks and they cooperate closely with Deutsche Bank. Due to this cooperation you are eligible to use your Bank of America debit card at any Deutsche Bank ATM - free of charge! You can easily check your account balance online and your relatives in the U.S. can 'send' you money without paying high fees for international transactions.

### AN EASY WAY TO WITHDRAW YOUR MONEY

It has happened that Ausländerbehörden asked students for a German bank account with a set amount of money (see the [embassy's website](#) for more info). Deutsche Bank offers so called "blocked" German Bank account for International students with the required minimum amount in it. If you don't spend this money, you don't need to replenish it. You can open such an account with Deutsche Bank before you depart the US:  
<https://www.deutsche-bank.de/pfb/content/pk-konto-und-karte-international-students.html>

### DEUTSCHE BANK

Before booking flights, not only compare prices but also make sure to become familiar with your airline's re-booking/cancellation policies. Airlines also vary in their policies regarding unaccompanied minors (e.g. ages, documents required) and visa policies, so please contact your airline and make sure you become familiar with your airline's specific policies regarding your trip to Germany.

### AIRLINES

## 7. PREPARATION

Students who are well prepared for their stay in Germany benefit most from the exchange. Being prepared will allow them to enjoy the experience even more. Thus, an appropriate preparation for your studies in Germany is not only the most challenging of tasks, but also one of the most important ones. Many problems can be avoided if you are properly prepared for your time in Germany before you leave home.

**GOOD  
PREPARA-  
TION**

Your GAPP coordinator from your U.S. high school is experienced and well prepared to help you to adjust as smoothly as possible to your new environment in Germany. Please ask him/her for the most recent edition of the GAPP Handbook. The following chapters will be of special interest:

**GAPP  
HANDBOOK**

Chapter 10 "Preparing the American Students for Germany"

Chapter 11 "The German School Experience"

These chapters highlight some cultural differences that you should be aware of and give important information about German school life. In addition to this, you can order two booklets from our office in New York - free of charge.

"Auf nach Deutschland – Germany here I come" provides you with a variety of exercises to help you get ready for the stay in Germany.

**GAPP  
MATERIAL**

"The German School Experience" is a bilingual activity booklet encouraging you to become a "cultural detective" and to explore your new environment in Germany.

In addition, we have put together the following list of links to help you to discover Germany and the German culture:

**USEFUL  
LINKS**

[www.germany-info.org](http://www.germany-info.org)

This English website provides you with current German-related news and various information about the German government, culture and society.

[www.dw-world.de/dw/0,,266,00.html](http://www.dw-world.de/dw/0,,266,00.html)

Deutsche Welle is Germany's international broadcaster. It carries out its legally defined mission while remaining journalistically independent.

<http://roots-in-germany.de/>

For the first time ever, documentation on German emigration to America, up-to-date information on Germany and tourist information are linked and blended. Find your roots in Germany!

[www.imove-germany.org](http://www.imove-germany.org)

iMOVE is an information and guidance center established by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research. Its aim is to supply information on what Germany has to offer in the field of continuing vocational training.

## 8. APPENDIX – SAMPLE LETTERS

### Aufnahmebestätigung

Letter of Acceptance  
(sample)

Hiermit bestätige ich gerne, dass (*student's name*), geboren am (*date of birth*), in (*place/state*), als Austauschschüler im Rahmen unserer bestehenden GAPP Partnerschaft mit der (*U.S. high school/state*), für den Zeitraum (*time of your intended stay in Germany*) unsere Schule besuchen wird. (*student's name*) wird von der Gastfamilie (*name of host family*) aufgenommen und unter folgender Anschrift in Deutschland wohnhaft sein: (*address of your prospective place of residence*). Sollten Sie noch weitere Fragen bezüglich des Antrages auf eine Aufenthaltsgenehmigung von (*student's name*) haben, zögern Sie bitte nicht mich zu kontaktieren (*principal's contact details*).

### Unterstützungszusage

Letter of Support  
(sample)

To Whom It May Concern:

My (*our*) (*son/daughter/foster child*) (*student's name*) will be in Germany from (*time of your intended stay in Germany*), participating in a long term GAPP exchange between (*U.S. high school/state*) and the (*German school*).

This letter certifies that I (*we*) will provide my (*our*) (*son/daughter/foster child*) with financial assistance during his/her studies in Germany. I (*we*) guarantee to send my (*our*) (*son/daughter/foster child*) at least €585 per month for personal expenses.

Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren,

mein(e)/unser(e) (Sohn, Tochter, Pflegekind) (*student's name*) wird von (*start date of your stay in Germany*) bis zum (*end date of your stay in Germany*) an einem Langzeitaustausch im Rahmen der GAPP-Partnerschaft der (*U.S. high school/state*) mit der/des (*German school*) teilnehmen.

Dieses Schreiben bestätigt, dass ich/wir meine(n)/unsere(n) (*son/daughter/foster child*) während seines/ihrer Aufenthalts in Deutschland finanziell unterstützen werde(n). Ich/wir garantiere(n) Ihnen, meinem(er)/unserem(er) (*son/daughter/foster child*) mindestens €585 pro Monat für persönliche Ausgaben zu überweisen.



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[www.goethe.de/gapp](http://www.goethe.de/gapp)

Your feedback is very much appreciated - please direct your suggestions and tips to  
[gapp@newyork.goethe.org](mailto:gapp@newyork.goethe.org)